

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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P R 131300Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3325

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 0285

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, BR, AO

SUBJECT: REBUTTAL OF PRESS ARTICLE ON ANGOLA AND DEFENSA OF SOUTH
ATLANTIC

REF: (A) BRASILIA 0036, (B) STATE 001464, (C) BRASILIA 0203,
(D) BRASILIA 212,

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY JANUARY 3 RELEASED SUBSTANCE OF CLARIFICATION PROVIDED BY EMBOFFS OF INACCURACIES IN JANUARY 1 ESTADO DE SAO PAULO REPORT ON U.S. VIEWS ON SOUTH ATLANTIC. AS RESULT OF PRESS INQUIRIES, EMBASSY ISSUED RELEASED PROVIDED REFTEL B. EMBOFFS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTACTS OVER UFORTHODOX WAY IN WHICH EMBASSY APPROACH TO MINISTRY WAS MADE PUBLIC. EXPLANATIONS GIVEN INDICATE THAT DECISION TO PUBLISH INFORMATION PROBABLY MADE BY FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA IN HOPE OF STRIKING BACK AT ARCH-CRITIC ESTADO. WHILE MOST OF PRESS NOTED BASIC SIMILARITY OF TWO RELEASES-- WITH SOME JOURNALS FOCUSING ON GREATER CONCERN EXPRESSED IN US RELEASE OVER CUBAN AND SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA--ESTADO HAS REACTED DEFENSIVELY BY SEEKING TO MAGNIFY DIFFERENCES AND OMISSIONS IN THE TWO, STRESSING THAT THIS INCIDENT IS ONE MORE IN SERIES OF POLICY CONTRADICTIONS AND TURNABOUTS MARKING THE DECLINE OF BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER SILVEIRA'S LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

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1. TO DISPEL ANY MISIMPRESSIONS WITHIN GOB LEFT BY ERRONEOUS

ARTICLE IN ESTADO DE SAO PAULO ON U.S. INTENTIONS IN SOUTH ATLANTIC (REFTEL A), EMBOFFS OUTLINED SUBSTANCE OF REF. B TO FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF OF AMERICAS DEPARTMENT (ARAUJO) AND AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA DEPARTMENT (ZAPPA) ON JANUARY 5 AND JANUARY 6 RSPECTIVELY. ARAUJO SAID THAT HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH ESTADO ARTICLE, TOOK FULL NOTES ON EMBOFFS POINTS,D EXPRSED HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE CLARIFICATION AND PROMISED THAT HE WOULD BRING IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FROEGIN MINISTER.

2. ZAPPA TOLD EMBOFF THAT PE WAS INDEED FUMILIAR WITH ARTICLE IN ESTADO JANUARY 1 AND SHORTLY AFTER ITS APPEARANCE HE HAD BEEN CALLED IN BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO DISCUSS IT. HE SAID MICISTER WAS CONCERNED OVER ARTICLE AND WAS CONSIDERING ISSUANCE OF FOREGIN MINISTRY DENIAL OF SOME OF ITS POINTSS. ZAPPA RECALLED THAT HE HAD TOLD THE MINISTER THAT SOME OF THE REPORT'S QUESTIONABLE POINTS SEEM TO HAVE RESULTED FROM AN UNFAITHFUL FRONT PAGE SUMMARIZATION DONE B EDITORIAL STAFF OF FULL TEXT OF MOTA MELLO ARTICLE CARRIED ON REAR PAGES. HE STATED THAT HE HAD RECOMMENDED TO FOREIGN MINISTER THAT ITAMARATY NOT COMMENT ON THE ARTICLE AND LET THE ISSUE DIE A NATURAL DEATH. ZAPPA NOTED THIS POINT IN CONNECTION WITH EMBOFF STATEMENT THAT EMBASSY AT THAT TIME DID NOT INTEND TO ISSUE PUBLIC CORRECTION OF ARTICLE. (EMB. HAD RECEIVED NO INQUIRIES ABOUT THE ARTICLE.) ZAPPA, WHO DID NOT TAKE NOTES ON EMBOFF'S POINTS, NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE "DELIGHTED" WITH U.S. CLARIFICATION OF MOTA MELLO ARTICLE.

3. ABOUT 4:30 P.M. JANUARY 8 USIS AND EMBOFF'S BEGAN RECEIVING TELEPHONE INQUIRIES FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES ABOUT NEWS RELEASE ON EMBASSY CORRECTION OF ESTADO ARTICLE WHICH WAS--IN UPI'S WORDS--"ISSUED THROUGH ITAMARATY." (EVEN SOME NEWSPAPERS FOLLOWING DAY BELIEVED ITAMARATY RELEASE ORIGINATED WITH EMBASSY.) AT ABOUT FIVE PM. FOREIGN MINISTRY RELEASE, UNTIL THAT MOMENT UNKNOWN TO ANY EMBASSY OFFICER, WAS PICKED UP BY EMBOFF AT ITAMARATY'S PRESS OFFICE. RELEASE DATED JANUARY 8 STATED FOLLOWING:
BEGIN FREE TRANSLATION OF TEXT: "WITH REFERENCE TO AN "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW" THAT SUPPOSEDLY WAS GIVEN TO THE JOURNALIST SERGIO MOTTA MELO OF ESTADO DE SAO PAULO BY EDWARD MULCAHY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, WHICH THAT
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PAPER PUBLISHED ON PAGE FIVE OF ITS EDITION OF JANUARY 1, UNDER THE TITLE, 'SOUTH ATLANTIC: AREA OF CONFRONTATION, WITH A FRONT-PAGE SUMMARY UNDER THE TITEL: 'DEFENSE OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WILL DPEND ON BRAZIL,' THE U.S. EMBASSY IN BRASILIA PRESENTED TO ITAMARATY, SPONTANEOUSLY, THE FOLLOWING CLARIFICATIONS THAT IT RECEIVED FROM WASHINGTON:
A) EDWARD MULCAHY AT NOT TIME BELIEVED HE WAS GIVING AN "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW" TO MOTTA MELO, CONSIDERING THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THEM TO BE A SIMPLE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY ON AFRICA INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE JOURNALIST "BACKGROUND"

ON THE QUESTION.

B) DURING THE CONVERSATION SEVERAL POINTS WERE DISCUSSED, NOT PRINCIPALLY (AS FRONT PAGE HEADLINE OF ESTADO SEEMS TO INDICATE) SECURITY ASPECTS OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

C) MOREOVER, MR. MULCAHY MADE NO STATEMENT ABOUT THE INTENTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO INSTALL NAVAL BASES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC OR TO INCREASE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ITS ALLIES IN THE REGION, AS THE MATERIAL IN ESTADO SUGGESTS.

D) SIMILARLY, MR. MULCAHY MADE NO REFERENCE TO ANY WARNING BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO ITAMARATY, AS ESTADO CLAIMS, WITH REGARD TO BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY ON ANGOLA PRODUCING EFFECTS OPPOSITE TO THOSE ORIGINALLY FORESEEN."

4. EMBASSY ISSUED THAT SAME EVENING THE STATEMENT CLARIFYING ESTADO ARTICLE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF REF. B (LESS SENTENCE MARKED "IF ASKED SPECIFICALLY").

5. EMBASSY'S STATEMENT, WHICH APPEARED SIDE BY SIDE WITH ITAMARATY'S RELEASE IN JANUARY 9 NEWSPAPERS, WAS INTRODUCED BY FOLLOWING PARA: BEGIN TEXT: "THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN BRASILIA HAS LEARNED OF A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS TODAY ADDRESSED TO A JANUARY 10 ESTADO DE SAO PAULO ARTICLE ARISING FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH U.S. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE EDWARD W. MULCAHY. IN VIEW OF NUMEROUS PRESS INQUIRIES PROMPTED BY THE RELEASE, THE EMBASSY WISHES TO FURNISH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:"

6. MAJOR NEWSPAPERS OF JANUARY 9 CARRIED THE TEXTS OF BOTH THE EMBASSY'S AND ITAMARATY'S RELEASES, COMMENTING IN MOST CASES ON ESSENTIAL SIMILARITY OF POINTS THEY CONTAINED, THOUGH POINTING TO DIFFERENCES OF NUANCES AND SEMANTICS. JORNAL DE BRASILIA SAW
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BOTH NOTES AS "REACHING SAME FUNDAMENTAL CONCLUSION", THOUGH IT WAS AMONG SEVERAL PAPERS OBSERVING THAT ITAMARATY'S NOTE MADE NO SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO CONSIDERATION OF BASES IN BRAZIL AS DID U.S. RELEASE. RIO'S JORNAL DO BRASIL HIGHLIGHTED U.S. RELEASE'S RE-EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA AND SAW RELEASE AS "COMPLEMENTING" ITAMARATY NOTE.

7. ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, HOWEVER, COMMENTED THAT "LACK OF COINCIDENCE BETWEEN TWO NOTES, RAISED AS MANY QUESTIONS AS ARE ANSWERED." ESTADO SOUGHT CLARIFICATION ON SUCH POINTS AS 1) USE OF WORD "INTERVIEW" IN U.S. RELEASE WHEN ITAMARATY DESCRIBED MULCAHY-MELO EXCHANGE AS "INFORMAL CONVERSATION": 2) FACT THAT TWO RELEASES DENIED THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITARY BASES IN AREA UNDER CONSIDERATION WHEN ESTADO ARTICLE MADE NO SUCH EXPLICIT AFFIRMATION IN FIRST PLACE: 3) FWFT THAT ITAMARATY VERSION DENIED THAT MULCAHY HAD MENTIONED ANY WARNING BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO BRAZIL THAT ITS POLICY ON ANGOLA MIGHT HAVE BOOMERANG EFFECT, WHILE U.S. VERSION ONLY DENIED THAT SUCH TERMS AS

"BOOMERANG EFFECT" WERE USED BUT DID NOT DENY THAT SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED.

8. IN INTEREST OF CLARIFICATION, ESTADO ASKED WAHT IS NATURE OF "POSITIONS AND CONCERNS" WHICH U.S. RELEASE SAYS WERE CONVEYED TO BRAZIL? WHICH MULCAHY QUOTTES WERE INACCURATE MOR OUT OF CONTEXT? AND WHY DID EMBASSY RELEASE ITS OWN NOTE IF FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS, AS CLAIMED, RELEASING INFORMATION "SPONTANEOUSLY PROVIDED" BY EMBASSY?

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3326

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 0285

9. ON JANUARY 9 POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR MADE SEPARATE CALLS RESPECTIVELY ON ITAMARATY'S CHIEF OF AFRICA AND ASIA DEPARTMENT (ZAPPA) AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S ADVISOR FOR PRESS AFFAIRS (BRANDAO) TO CONVEY EMBASSY'S CONCERN OVER FOREIGN MINISTRY'S UNILATERAL RELEASE, WITHOUT ANY PRIOR NOTICE TO EMBASSY, OF WHAT HAD BEEN CLEARLY INDICATED AT TIME TO BE PRIVATE EXCHANGE BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS. ZAPPA TOLD POL COUNSELOR THAT ITAMARATY'S RELEASE WAS ISSUED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE BY FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS ADVISOR, PROBABLY AT FOREIGN MINISTER'S DIRECTION, AFTER MINISTER HAD SEEN RECORD OF EMBOFF'S DEMARCHE OF JANUARY 6. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SOME SORT OF CONSULTATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN, HE EXPLAINED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BELIEVED THAT RELEASE OF INFORMATION WOULD HELP U.S.-BRAZILIAN RELATIONS.

(HE ALSO NOTED THAT MEMO OF EMBOFF'S DEMARCHE PREPARED BY CHIEF OF AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DID NOT MENTION ANY SPECIFIC U.S. OBJECTION TO PUBLICATION.) BRAZIL'S FAILURE TO CONSULT HAS RECENT PRECEDENT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, IN ANY EVENT, HE ADDED, SINCE U.S. "RELEASED" TEXT OF PROTEST NOTE ON ZIONISM VOTE WITHOUT CONSULTING ITAMARATY. (POL COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT PROTEST NOTE HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED AND THAT SITUATIONS WERE NOT COMPARABLE IN ANY EVENT.) ZAPPA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROCEDURE IN THIS CASE HAD BEEN UNUSUAL AND AGREED TO CONVEY EMBASSY'S CONCERN OVER INCIDENT

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TO APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS.

10. PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR EXPRESSED TO BRANDAO EMBASSY'S SURPRISE OVER UNORTHODOX WAY IN WHICH EMBASSY'S CORRECTION OF ESTADO ARTICLE HAD BEEN MADE PUBLIC. BRANDAO CALLED BACK LATER TO EXPLAIN THAT ITAMARATY HAD BELIEVED THAT THE CLARIFICATION OF MULCAHY ARTICLES PROVIDED BY EMB OFFS HAD BEEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF LETTING THE PUBLIC KNOW HOW THE AMBASSADOR FELT ABOUT IT. PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR REITERATED EMBASSY'S VIEW THAT SUCH DEMARCHES SHOULD BE PRIVILEGED AND THAT WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED PRIOR NOTICE OR CONSULTATION.

11. WHILE MOST OF PRESS HAD CEASED COVERING INCIDENT BY JANUARY 10, ESTADO CARRIED STORY BASED ON "DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" TO EFFECT THAT U.S. EMBASSY WAS "SURPRISED" BY ITAMARATY'S ATTEMPT TO USE OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY U.S. EXPLANATION TO DISCREDIT ESTADO AND THAT FOREIGN MINISTER THUS ALMOST CREATED "DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT". ARTICLE CONTINUED BY RE-EMPHASIZING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN U.S. AND BRAZILIAN RELEASES, ADDING THAT U.S. RELEASE WHICH "MORE SERENE AND CORRECT," STRESSED ASPECTS THAT BRAZILIAN NOTE, WHICH MORE "CONFUSING", IGNORED OR PLAYED DOWN. ESTADO NOTED THIS IS SERIES OF CONTRADICTORY OR CONFUSING STATEMENTS OR POLICY REVERSALS BY ITAMARATY. ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE REPORTED THAT DEPUTY DIAS MENEZES (MDB-SAO PAULO) WOULD ASK FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, WHEN CONGRESS RESUMES IN MARCH, TO SUMMON FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA FOR EXPLANATION OF "NOTORIOUSLY CONTRADICTORY POSITIONS, OUT OF CHARACTER WITH ITAMARATY'S TRADITION OF CLEAR DECISIONS". MENEZES QUOTED AS CITING EPISODE OF PRESS RELEASES, ALONG WITH ZIONISM VOTE, REVERSAL OF POLICY ON SPORTS PARTICIPATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND DUBIOUS POSITION ON ANGOLA--AS EVENTS DEMANDING EXPLANATION.

12. ESTADO OF JANUARY 10 ALSO CARRIED BY-LINE ARTICLE BY SERGIO MOTTA MELO, AUTHOR OF JANUARY 1 REPORT, QUOTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MULCAHY (IN WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS TELEPHONE INTERVIEW) AS DESCRIBING INCIDENT OF RELEASES AS "FOOTBALL GAME THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND." STATES MULCAHY SAID THAT HE HAD ONLY READ EXCERPTS OF JANUARY 1 ESTADO STORY AND WOULD PROVIDE FURTHER CLARIFICATION AFTER HE HAD STUDIED FULL TEXT. MELLA

ARGUES THAT ORIGINAL INTERVIEW WAS CLEARLY AN INTERVIEW, NOT
BACKGROUND BRIEFING: AND THAT MULCAHY GAVE HIM PERMISSION
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TO QUOTE HIM, WITH EXCEPTION OF BRIEF PART OF CONVERSATION ON
DOMESTIC SCENE. REPORTER FURTHER CLAIMS THAT HE RECALLS CLEARLY
THAT TERM "BOOMERANG EFFECT" WAS USED BY MULCAHY AND HAS NOTES
TO PROVE IT, ADDING THAT MULCAHY STATED HE NOW DOES NOT
REMEMBER.

13. IN LEAD EDITORIAL JANUARY 11, ESTADO SAY INCIDENT OF PRESS
RELEASE AS LATEST IN SERIES OF DEVELOPMENTS POINTING TO DEFINITE
DECLINE OF BRAZILIAN DIPLOMACY UNDER LEADERSHIP OF SILVEIRA.
OTHER STEPS ESTADO CLAIMED WERE IN DOWNWARD DIRECTION
WERE 1) LOSS OF BALANCE IN INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS WITH
HEIGHTENED DEFERENCE TO "REPRESENTATIVES OF ISLAM"; 2) CONDEMNATION
OF ZIONISM; 3) RECOGNITION OF MPLA IN ANGOLA; 4) SLEIGHT
OF HAND SHOWN IN REVERSING DECISION ON RIO-CAPETOWN YACHT RACE
(BRASILIA 203); 5) PUBLIC GLEE DISPLAYED OVER MPLA VICTORIES
(BRASILIA 0212) ALLEGEDLY PROVING CORRECTNESS OF RECOGNITION
POLICY. EDITORIAL AGAIN BEARS DOWN ON DIFFERENCES OF SEMANTICS
AND EMPHASIS BETWEEN TWO RELEASES PARTICULARLY NOTING GREATER
LEVEL OF CONCERN OVER SOUTH ATLANTIC DEVELOPMENTS INDICATED IN
U.S. VERSION. EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT THESE ARE "EMBARRASSING
TRUTHS FOR A FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO A
SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BUT WHICH DOES NOT SUCCEED
IN MAKING THE STATE DEPARTMENT A SPOKESMAN FOR FOREIGN
MINISTRY'S VERSION."

COMMENT: IT IS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA
MADE PERSONAL DECISION TO RELEASE SUBSTANCE OF US EXPLANATION
OF ESTADO'S JANUARY 1 ARTICLE WITHOUT CONSULTING US.
OBVIOUSLY, SILVEIRA SAW THIS AS OPPORTUNITY TO STRIKE BACK
AT ESTADO, WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTING RENEWED CAMPAIGN OF
ATTACKS ON HIM AND HIS POLICIES SINCE BRAZIL VOTED IN UNGA
TO CONDEMN ZIONISM. ESTADO LOGICALLY SAW RELEASE AS
SPECIFIC EFFORT TO IMPUGN ITS CREDIBILITY AND, REACTING WITH
EXTREME DEFENSIVENESS, HAS TRIED TO EXPLOIT MINOR
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO RELEASES TO CHALLENGE ITAMARATY'S
OWN CREDIBILITY. UNFORTUNATELY FOR ITAMARATY, ESTADO'S
LATEST ATTACKS SEEM MORE CONVINCING IN LIGHT OF CURRENT
SERIES OF MISHANDLED OR CONFUSING ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS
THAT HAVE NOT HELPED MINISTRY'S CREDIBILITY. MINISTER
APPARENTLY RECOGNIZES CREDIBILITY GAP AND NEED FOR GREATER
CONSISTENCY AND COORDINATION IN HANDLING PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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MATTERS. PRESS REPORTED JANUARY 10 THAT MINISTER HAD
ISSUED CONFIDENTIAL INSTRUCTION TO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS
REQUIRING ALL CONTACTS WITH PRESS TO BE THROUGH THE OFFICE
OF THE PRESS ADVISOR. MEDIA REACTION HAS BEEN SHARP AND
NEGATIVE, ARGUING THAT ATTEMPTS TO "GAG" FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIALS IS SELF-DEFEATING AND THAT ANSWER TO ITAMARATY'S
CURRENT PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS--AND BY EXTENSION THOSE
OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN GENERAL--IS MORE OPENNESS AND CANDOR,
NOT LESS. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

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